

IN THE CLAIMS:

1-31 (Cancelled).

32. (New) A differential pan removeably attachable to a vehicle to cover the differential unit of the vehicle and a locking device able to be fitted to the differential unit of the vehicle, the arrangement being such that when the locking device is fitted to the differential unit and the differential pan is attached to the vehicle, the differential unit and the locking device are inside the differential pan.

33. (New) A differential pan as claimed in Claim 32, in which the locking device includes a mechanical actuator which acts on the locking device to operate the locking device.

34. (New) A differential pan as claimed in Claim 33, in which the actuator includes a solenoid.

35. (New) A differential pan as claimed in Claim 32, in which the actuator is adapted to be mounted on the axle casing, within the differential pan area.

36. (New) A differential pan as claimed in Claim 32, in which the actuator is adapted to be mounted on a differential pan mounting ring.

37. (New) A differential pan as claimed Claim 32, in which the locking device comprises a fork which is able to communicate reciprocal movement which engages/disengages a sliding dog gear, splined to the half shaft of the vehicle, into a splined bearing journal located in the differential carrier.

38. (New) A differential pan as claimed in Claim 32, in which there is a ring with an additional protrusion which can be fitted to the axle assembly to act as a mounting stage for an extended differential pan.

39. (New) A differential pan as claimed in Claim 32, which is constructed from an acrylonitrile/butadiene/styrene (ABS) plastics material

40. (New) A vehicle having an axle incorporating:

(i) a differential unit comprising a differential housing and a differential pan removeably attached to the differential housing to cover the differential unit of the vehicle; and

(ii) a locking device fitted to the differential unit of the vehicle;

wherein the differential pan accommodated the locking device.

41. (New) A vehicle as claimed in Claim 40, wherein the differential pan has an extended area to accommodate part of the locking device.

42. (New) A vehicle as claimed in Claim 41, in which there is a ring with an additional protrusion, which is fitted to the axle assembly, which acts as a mounting stage for the extended differential pan.

43. (New) A vehicle as claimed in Claims 40, in which there is a press-in bearing journal fitted into the differential carrier core, which incorporates a splined locking portion and also acts as a bearing journal for the sun gear of the differential unit.

44. (New) A vehicle as claimed in Claim 40, including a manual override for the locking device.

45. (New) A vehicle as claimed in Claim 40, in which the actuator is mounted on a support selected from the group consisting of the differential unit bearing cap, the axle casing, within the differential pan area, and the differential pan mounting ring.

46. (New) A vehicle as claimed in Claim 40, in which the differential pan is removable to set up, inspect and/or adjust the differential lock assembly.

47. (New) A vehicle as claimed in Claim 40, in which the axle casing material is reduced under differential pan to allow for locking component movement.

48. (New) A vehicle as claimed in Claim 40, in which a differential pan mounting ring is used as reinforcement to the axle assembly.

49. (New) A vehicle as claimed in Claim 40, in which there is a removable differential guard mounted onto the differential pan mounting ring bolts.

50. (New) A vehicle as claimed in Claim 40, in which there are mounting studs used to create a space between mounting ring and axle assembly suitable for welding.

51. (New) A vehicle as claimed in Claim 40, where reciprocal movement caused by an actuator positioned under a removeably

attachable cover is employed to warn the operator of the operational status of the actuator.

52. (New) A vehicle as claimed in Claim 40, where a switch mounting plate combined with a bearing adjuster locking tab is employed.

53. (New) A vehicle as claimed in Claim 40, where a switching device is mounted inside the shaped ring to communicate operational status or position of the actuator.

54. (New) A method for converting a non-locking differential for a vehicle to a locking differential, said non-locking differential having a differential housing and a differential pan removeably mounted thereon, which method comprises the steps of:

- (i) removing the existing differential pan;
- (ii) modifying and/or replacing the existing components of the non-locking differential as necessary to receive a locking component;
- (iii) fitting a locking component moveable between an inoperative position in which said differential is not locked and an operative position in which said differential is locked;
- (iv) fitting an actuator for moving said locking component from its inoperative position to its operative position;
- (v) operably connecting said actuator to said locking component; and
- (vi) mounting a differential pan which accommodates said actuator on said differential housing.

55. (New) A method according to Claim 54, further comprising the

step of attaching a new mounting ring on the differential housing to receive the differential pan which accommodates the actuator.

56. (New) A method according to Claim 55, in which the mounting ring is attached to the rear of the axle assembly by welding.

57. (New) A method according to Claim 54, in which a mechanical actuator device is mounted inside the shaped ring, parallel to the half shaft to operate the locking device which actuator is connected to a fork, which in turn communicates reciprocal movement which engages/disengages a sliding dog gear, splined to the half shaft, into a splined bearing journal located in the differential carrier.

58. (New) A method according to Claim 54, in which the actuator is a solenoid.

59. (New) A method according to Claim 55, in which there are mounting studs used to create a space between mounting ring and axle assembly suitable for welding.